

AWG Meeting Minutes
August 13, 2018

1. Welcome and Roll Call

Present: Linda Bartram, Paul Jones, Chris Marks, Chris Dobbie, Robin Bayley (via Skype) and Steve Bertrand
(Interpreters: Keith Brougham, Mary Butterfield)

Councillor: Councillor Loveday

Guests: Jason Ducharme, Team Leader, MNP (via speaker phone)
Tim Cottrell, Advisory and Accessibility Expert, MNP
Dave Willows, Member of the VRDC parking committee
Christine Paisley (via speaker phone), VRDC

Staff: Brad Dellebuur and Christine Brinton, City of Victoria

Regrets: Councillor Isitt and Susan Gallagher

2. Approval of August 13, 2018 agenda

The AWG approved the agenda as amended.

Moved by Chris M, seconded by Robin. Carried

- Added Update on off-leash pilot
- Update on AWG and Advisory Committee Governance

3. Approval of July 9, 2018 minutes

The AWG approved the minutes of July 9, 2018 as circulated.

Moved by Chris M, seconded by Chris D. Carried

Note: Robin brought forward the discussion on item 5d (Accessible Meeting Venue) of the July 9, 2018 minutes where Councillor Isitt advised the

group that AWG members can bring their individual concerns to Council at every Council meeting. Robin would like to clarify that this statement is only valid for those individuals who do not experience barriers in entering City Hall and Council Chambers. Those with conditions such as certain allergies or environmental sensitivities cannot physically attend a Council meeting and Legislative Services staff have denied a request to accommodate by allowing those experiencing barriers to address Council remotely.

4. Business Arising from Minutes:

a) Curb Cut Standards and Truncated Dome Pilot:

Linda would like clarification from staff - updating the City of Victoria's Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw with the standard drawing with a "10 mm curb lip".

Curb Cut Standards - Brad advised the AWG that official standards in the bylaw currently show a zero lip wheelchair ramp. He advised that Engineering has provided verbal instruction to work crews and design staff to put in the 10 mm lip (as was discussed and approved). The bylaw has not yet been amended, but the plan is to roll this into a series of other amendments to be put forward for approval by the end of 2018. Staff have also given instructions to the development community so that they are installing to the new, appropriate standard. Brad assured the AWG that if a no lip curb was installed by mistake, it would be promptly redone with a 10 ml lip, or corrected with a tactile warning.

Truncated Dome Pilot Update – on Monday, July 30, 2018 the City of Victoria began construction to install Truncated Domes at the pedestrian crossings at the intersection of Blanshard Street and Fort Streets. Truncated Domes are used internationally to provide a detectable warning that assists visually impaired persons to locate wheelchair ramps, the edge of curbs, and the direction of travel to cross a street.

The intersection of Blanshard and Fort is one of 7 locations where truncated domes are planned:

1. Blanshard/Hillside
2. Bay/Government
3. Bay/Douglas
4. Shakespeare/Hillside
5. Cedar Hill/North Dairy
6. Bay/Richmond and
7. Blanshard/Fort

These are scheduled on the work plan and Brad is striving to have these completed by the end of the year.

Action: Brad will let AWG know when the other truncated domes are to be installed once he knows the exact date.

b) Update On Council Decision To Have Staff Report Back On Our Council Liaisons' Motion To Expedite Making City Hall Accessible

Councillor Loveday updated the AWG regarding the AWG Council Liaisons' motion regarding Accessibility at City Hall, discussed at the COTW meeting on July 19, 2018. It was based on the following motion from the AWG's meeting of July 9, 2018.

“That Council direct staff to take steps to create an accessible meeting space at City Hall”

An amended motion was approved as follows:

That Council direct staff to report back at the next quarterly update on the implications of achieving 1 and 2:

1. Take steps on a priority basis to create a meeting space at City Hall that is accessible to people with a range of disabilities, including people who cannot participate due to allergens / air quality.
2. Continue to remove barriers to access in the Council Chamber and other public areas at City Hall, including entrances, corridors and washroom facilities associated with access to, and use of, these public spaces.

It was recommended that Council provide direction to staff, to ensure that City Hall, as the centre of our local government, is accessible to all people, beginning with provision of an accessible meeting space, and then removing barriers to participation in the Council Chamber and other public areas in City Hall. Staff have addressed the barrier of scented cleaning products but there is still the practice of welcoming pets into City Hall and the lack of a general scent free policy.

On July 21, 2018 Linda requested a meeting with Brad, Thomas Soulliere and Robin to explore options for making City Hall accessible. She asked for an update. Robin advised that standard principle and practice in accommodating disabilities is to communicate directly with the person in need of accommodation and rely on their expertise, to jointly determine solutions. To date, Brad has been unable to arrange this meeting. Several AWG members reiterated that this is the usual practice spelled out in human rights decisions when a person requires accommodation. The person with the disability is the expert and can share research, literature and best practices with the City and should be involved in, and kept informed of, all steps taken.

Action: Brad will discuss the request with the Director of Engineering to help facilitate this meeting.

4:22 pm Paul and Steve B joined the meeting.

c) Accessibility Framework: AWG Engagement / Consultation and Consultant Work plan/Approach

At 4:24 pm the AWG called Jason Ducharme of MNP, the consultants engaged by the City to work on the Accessibility Framework. Jason introduced himself and the staff working with him, and expressed his pleasure with having been selected for this important work.

The MNP team:

- Jason Ducharme – Team leader
- Bill Reid – Quality Assurance partner
- Rachel Kidney – Project consultant
- Tim Cottrell – Advisor and accessibility expert (in attendance)

Project overview:

- Purpose: Develop an Accessibility Framework to reduce barriers for people with disabilities, strengthen the City of Victoria’s accessibility policies, guidelines, and tools necessary to equip City teams with the information and guidance to reduce barriers and enhance accessibility standards
- Approach: Four Phases
 - Set the Context for an Accessibility Framework
 - Identify Accessibility Gaps and Risk Assessments
 - Develop the Accessibility Framework
 - Develop an Implementation Strategy
- Approximate timing:
 - Set the Context – August to September
 - Accessibility Gaps – October to November
 - Framework development – November – December
 - Implementation Strategy – January
 - Council project briefing in late September

A highly collaborative and stakeholder-informed process:

- Look forward to working with the AWG
- Broader consultation with key stakeholders and the public

Quick discussion questions for the AWG:

- What do you feel are the greatest accessibility challenges facing the City right now?
- What does this project need to achieve to be really successful?

Linda gave an update on the history of the AWG and the Accessibility Framework:

- The AWG was functioning for over a year and it became very evident to the AWG that the Accessibility Framework was necessary and brought it forward to the attention of Council in January 2017.
- Robin answered the question “what are the greatest accessibility challenges facing the City right now” with “lack of organizational capacity”
- Robin - prepared an email in which she set out her thoughts on the consultants’ questions, circulated in advance to members and the

consultants, the contents of which she spoke to. (This document is attached to these minutes.)

- Linda added the lack of disability awareness and City policies with regards to accessibility
- Chris D. - agrees there is a lack of understanding on the part of the City about what accessibility includes. Important to give everyone a chance to understand our needs.
- Paul – lack of knowledge and understanding is causing decision paralysis. There is fear of setting precedence.

Jason said he was not surprised to learn of the capacity issue. This is a very difficult area for many organizations, they don't know who should respond, for example - website accessibility is the IT department, employment is HR department, physical things such as streets and lampposts is the Engineering Department, buses and the transit system is BC Transit. That requires a coordinated effort by many involved. The lack of understanding is the same in other jurisdictions, and can be addressed with a proactive approach of awareness building.

- Chris M – there might be frustration and things moving slowly but it's all part of the process. Especially with no Provincial standards.
- Paul - Be in front and be bold.

Jason suggests a biweekly project meeting, confirming timelines and then will get back to AWG. Committed to working with the AWG once they have met with the City.

- Robin – you need to focus in house, instead of consulting the community, where the AWG already has a huge list of issues identified. Not sure all of this consultation is a good use of time when the AWG has all the resources and knowledge needed.
- Jason – need to give all groups the opportunity to provide input as part of the process. The highest value of input will come from AWG.
- Brad will be forwarding all information from this group to the consultants, such as the survey, issues list, etc.

Jason thanked the group.

Robin noted that sound quality of the mobile phone on speaker was poor for her on Skype. She asked that a different technical means for the consultants to participate remotely be used in the future. This reinforces the fact that Robin should be in person in the room. Robin

informed the group of the technical and communications barriers and emotional toll of being the only member to be excluded and have to participate remotely. For instance, resolution is not sufficient to observe facial expressions and she feels conspicuous on screen.

Meeting like this today and the September meeting are a temporary solution and the group hopes that Robin will be able to attend the October meeting in person.

d) Strategy RE: Quarterly Report On AWG Recommendations (Issues List) For Quarterly Review In September

The Quarterly review will be presented to COTW on September 6 (before the AWG meets next). Staff has direction to report back on the advisability and resources for implementing AWG recommendations. AWG asked if there is anything it could do to assist. There was concern as to whether the issues list that staff is working with was up to date. AWG is also concerned about the amount of work required for the analysis.

Brad indicated that he has the latest issues list, with a number of outstanding items, along with the commentary that Council was looking for. Brad would like to know what kind of feedback the AWG would like to be involved with. Linda has a list of 23 items that are not resolved.

On May 24, 2018, COTW approved the recommendations of Councillors Isitt and Loveday:

1. That staff be directed to include in the Quarterly Update a list of recommendations from the Accessibility Working Group and Active Transportation Advisory Committee, with comments from staff including the advisability of the recommendations and potential resource implications, to inform Council's consideration of the recommendations.
2. And that recommendations from the Accessibility Working Group and Active Transportation Advisory Committee relating to time-sensitive matters (matters which will be considered by Council prior to the next Quarterly Update) may be brought forward in a Council member report by a Council Liaison directly to the Committee of the

Whole, within two weeks of the advisory committee meeting where the recommendation was adopted.”

ACTION: Brad will forward to the AWG the list that staff is working from.

The AWG wondered if Linda would be able to speak to the quarterly report on AWG issues. Brad indicated that the answer was no as Brad’s report would be an appendix to the larger report which would be presented by another department and protocol would not permit Linda to speak to the report.

e) Action items from Crystal Pool consultation

Two action items from last meeting:

1. The Rick Hansen Accessibility Certification (rating survey which was developed to measure access under the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Program, April 2018), was emailed to the AWG on August 9, 2018.

Action: AWG members to review and note accessibility areas which it does not cover for future consultations.

2. The design for the entrance was changed, allowing more direct access to the reception desk but it is still part of the great hall. This may still be of concern to Robin.

Action: Brad will reach out to Adam and then reach out to Robin so they can discuss whether a separate entrance is still required.

f) Accessibility Primer

The AWG put forward the following motion:

Moved (Robin)

Seconded (Paul)

The Accessibility Working Group approves the document titled “Attending an Accessibility Working Group Meeting” of August 2018 and recommends that Council direct staff to distribute it to all departments in a timely manner and ensure that any staff or consultants attending AWG meetings are aware of its requirements.

CARRIED

Action: The Primer will be posted on the city website.

g) Balancing Accessibility Considerations with Pollinator Habitat

This was deferred to the next meeting, with the request that appropriate Parks staff attend, to participate in a discussion.

Action: Brad will extend the invitation to Parks.

h) VRDC Parking Committee: Recommendations for City Managed Accessible Parking Improvement

Dave Willows and Christine Paisley (via speakerphone) of the VRDC Parking Committee put forward a paper “VRDC Parking Committee: Recommendations for City Managed Accessible Parking Improvement” which was updated on August 3, 2018 in which the VRCD strongly urge the City of Victoria to adopt a recognized standard for all accessible parking.

The Canadian Standards Association CAN/CSA B651 Accessible Design for the Built Environment is a nationally recognized accessibility standard that provides clear guidance on the recommended design and number for all types of accessible parking including (general passenger) loading zones, parallel and angle parking.

Questions posed in the VDRC report to the City of Victoria (with answers provided at the meeting in italics).

1. Who does the City of Victoria give permission to use accessible parking stalls without an accessible parking permit? *No one.*

2. What action does the City of Victoria take to ensure accessibility is maintained when an accessible parking space is closed due to planned construction, community and other events? *Short term accessible parking is provided as close to the locations as possible, Christine Paisley then asked if appropriate signage could be made visible when alternate accessible parking is provided.*
3. Does the City of Victoria have a tow-away policy for parking infractions? *This is at Parking Services discretion. If the vehicle has 5 or more parking infractions associated with it, they can authorize the tow. Robin suggested a zero tolerance for parking in an accessible space. AWG discussed the idea of a no-tolerance tow policy for vehicles without a placard and it was decided that this should not be pursued at this time. Persons with disabilities might be towed by mistake and this could be very problematic. Higher fines and making the accessible parking spaces more visible are preferable actions to be considered.*
4. Who has the authority to tow a vehicle parked in violation of municipal by-law? *Victoria Police Department*
5. Can a parking ambassador request a vehicle be towed once a parking ticket has been issued? *No*
6. Does the city have a contractor they use for towing illegally parked vehicles? *Yes, the company is called All-Ways Towing*
7. Why have none of the basic improvements, including moving portable obstructions, been undertaken yet? *This is on the list to review, and will be included in the September Quarterly Review on AWG recommendations.*

Brad reported that the City has recently hired a consultant to work on the Sustainable Mobility Strategy and they will be asked to give, at a high level, some strategies for some of the priority 2 and 3 recommendations in the report.

Jeremy left the meeting at 5:36 pm

The AWG put forward the following motion:

Moved (Steve)

Seconded (Chris M)

The “VRDC Parking Committee: Recommendations for City Managed Accessible Parking Improvement” report and recommendations be accepted and adopted, and put on the issues list.

CARRIED

i) Polara APS Features

Linda looked into features and will report back to the AWG at another time.

5. New Business:

a) Centennial Square Action Plan

Anna Babicz, Urban Designer for the City of Victoria has asked if the AWG would have interest in meeting in Centennial Square sometime in September to discuss accessibility design.

Action: Anna to send out blanket email with details and AWG can respond directly to Anna.

6. Next Meeting – September 10, 2018

3 items going forward to the next agenda

- Balancing Pollinator Habitat
- Update on off-leash pilot
- Update on AWG and Advisory Committee Governance

7. Adjournment at 6:04 pm

Attachment – Robin Bayley email

From: Robin Bayley

Sent: Saturday, August 11, 2018 2:29 PM

To: Chris Dobbie; Chris Marks, Christine Brinton, Linda Bartram; Paul Jones; Steve Bertrand; Susan Gallagher

Cc: Brad Dellebuur; Jeremy Loveday (Councillor); Ben Isitt (Councillor)

Subject: AWG - my thoughts re. Consultant questions for Aug 13 meeting

Dear AWG Members and Liaisons

Because the agenda is so crowded with very important items, I thought it useful to share my thoughts regarding the questions posed in the attachment from the contractors hired to work on the Accessibility Framework. I do this not in order to pre-empt your thoughts, but because these questions are so important and I believe our answers should be considered and given after we discuss it. Maybe we need to send the message that we will give our individual thoughts on Monday, but we also want the opportunity to provide a unified answer later.

From the agenda attachments:

Quick discussion questions for the AWG:

1. What do you feel are the greatest accessibility challenges facing the City right now?
2. What does this project need to achieve to be really successful?

MY THOUGHTS

1. Greatest Accessibility Challenges:

Rather than a specific barrier, I think that the challenges relate to deficiencies in **organizational capacity**: knowledge, resources (predominately staff time but also contract funds) and processes, including decision-making, planning and budgeting systems.

In my opinion, we continue to see barriers erected while progress on tackling existing barriers is very slow. The slow pace of progress will continue until the City improves its ability to respond to barriers. And barriers will continue to be erected [until] the City learns to recognize barriers and assess mitigations. When AWG recommendations come forward, the Mayor frequently asks staff what other planned work needs to be dropped in order for this “new” issue to be dealt with. Yet serious, long-standing and known accessibility issues are not getting into plans. We have seen 3 budget cycles pass without staff asking for the resources for specific operational projects or a new hire with the knowledge, skills abilities and capacity. Almost every week, we see issues coming before Council with incomplete or incorrect accessibility analysis, and the AWG having had little or no opportunity AWG to advise and report.

In addition to lack of systems and resources, the lack of knowledge/awareness on the part of staff and decision makers is probably the single biggest barrier.

I watch discussions at COTW that demonstrate difficulty Staff and Council have with recognizing an accessibility issue as well as lack of an analytical framework for understanding and discussing accessibility issues. They don't know the City's reasonable accommodation responsibilities or the standard processes for providing it ("they" as a group, but with exceptions). They don't know other organizations that are leading in the field and that might provide models. They don't know how other organizations have handled the same and very common issues. All this leads to ruling out certain types of mitigations up-front, bringing stereotypes and assumptions to the conversation, unconscious ableism, suggesting exclusionary mitigations, while They have been known to use outmoded/discredited language in some instances. They see accessibility, particularly dealing with unusual barriers, as scary and insolvable. This is understandable – they were hired or came into politics when knowledge and skills in this field were not the norm or required expertise. We frequently see action on our recommendations postponed because they have to study them (using outside experts, when the knowledge should exist in-house), understand all implications (a hurdle not applied to decisions in other spheres), or decisions being made not to attempt some things at all because they don't know where to start.

Conclusion: The biggest accessibility challenge is lack of organizational capacity

If they insist on receiving an answer that relates to specific barriers, then I would say inaccessibility of information and engagement because people with disabilities cannot learn what's going on, see plans, or participate in engagement activities. Therefore, the City doesn't learn of barriers, their magnitude and potential solutions.

2. What the Accessibility Framework needs to achieve:

- Full buy-in of all departments and an understanding on the part of all staff that ensuring accessibility is everyone's job.
- Build capacity and leave a legacy of officially adopted policies, standards, systems and plans that will be in place when the consultants are gone.
- Everyone has a basic understanding and awareness of accessibility law, breadth, principles, barriers and City policies re. accessibility
- A multi-year resourcing plan

Means:

A multi-disciplinary team or at least contacts in each area to facilitate the work of consultants.

Capitalizes on the knowledge and expertise of AWG members and builds on the significant analysis and work already done. E.g., the outline of the framework and governance analysis.

Sufficient budget so that implementation-ready tools are available. Produce not just a plan but some outputs that can be used.

Acknowledgement that the Framework will take years to completely implement and that it will be a process of continual improvement, PLUS a plan to get there.

A made in BC approach, specific to the City – not cookie-cutter re OADA.

Thank you for your attention and I welcome thoughts from each of you in advance or at the meeting.

Robin Bayley